

Claims

1. A method of treatment or prophylaxis of atherosclerosis, hypercholesterolemia or a cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis, which method comprises administration of one or more GHRPs to a patient in need of such treatment or prophylaxis.
2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, which comprises preventing the development of atherosclerotic plaques, hypercholesterolemia or a cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis by administering one or more GHRPs to a patient at risk of developing such plaques, hypercholesterolemia or cardiovascular diseases.
3. A method as claimed in Claim 1, which comprises treating pre-existing atherosclerosis, hypercholesterolemia or a cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis by administering one or more GHRPs to a patient who has atherosclerosis, hypercholesterolemia or a cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis.
4. A method as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis is coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction or stroke.
5. A method of reducing the total blood plasma cholesterol level of a patient in need of such cholesterol level reduction, which method comprises administering to said patient one or more GHRPs.
6. A method of reducing the blood plasma level of non-HDL cholesterol in a patient in need of such non-HDL cholesterol level reduction, which method comprises administering to said patient one or more GHRPs.

7. A method of negatively modulating CD36 expression, which method comprises administering one or more GHRPs to a patient who would benefit from negative modulation of CD36 expression.
8. A method of increasing expression of genes involved in cellular cholesterol efflux, which method comprises administering one or more GHRPs to a patient who would benefit from increased expression of such genes.
9. A method as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the genes involved in cellular cholesterol efflux are those for nuclear receptor LXR α and/or ABCA1 transporter.
10. A method for decreasing oxLDL cholesterol uptake by macrophages by modulating CD36 expression and/or function, which method comprises administering one or more GHRPs to a patient who would benefit from reduction in the uptake of oxidised lipoprotein by macrophages.
11. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the one or more GHRPs are hexarelin (His-(D)-(Me)Trp-Ala-Trp-(D)-Phe-Lys-NH₂) or EP80317 (Haic-(D)-(Me)Trp-(D)-Lys-Trp-(D)-Phe-Lys-NH₂).
12. The use of one or more GHRPs for the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prophylaxis of atherosclerosis, hypercholesterolemia or a cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis.

13. Use as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the medicament is for preventing the development of atherosclerotic plaques, hypercholesterolemia or a cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis.
14. Use as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the medicament is for treating pre-existing atherosclerosis, hypercholesterolemia or a cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis.
15. Use as claimed in any one of Claims 12 to 14 wherein the cardiovascular disease associated with atherosclerosis is coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction or stroke.
16. The use of one or more GHRPs for the manufacture of a medicament for reducing the total blood plasma cholesterol level of a patient in need of such cholesterol level reduction.
17. The use of one or more GHRPs for the manufacture of a medicament for reducing the blood plasma level of non-HDL cholesterol in a patient in need of such non-HDL cholesterol level reduction.
18. The use of one or more GHRPs for the manufacture of a medicament for the negative modulation of CD36 expression in a patient who would benefit from such modulation of expression.
19. The use of one or more GHRPs for the manufacture of a medicament for increasing expression of genes involved in cellular cholesterol efflux in a patient who would benefit from increased expression of such genes.

20. Use as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the genes involved in cellular cholesterol efflux are those for nuclear receptor LXR α and/or ABCA1 transporter.
21. The use of one or more GHRPs for the manufacture of a medicament for the modulation of oxidised lipoprotein uptake by macrophages in a patient who would benefit from such modulation.
22. Use as claimed in any of Claims 12 to 21, wherein the one or more GHRPs are hexarelin (His-(D)-(Me)Trp-Ala-Trp-(D)-Phe-Lys-NH₂) or EP80317 (Haic-(D)-(Me)Trp-(D)-Lys-Trp-(D)-Phe-Lys-NH₂).
23. The use of growth hormone releasing peptides of Hexarelin family, of derived peptidomimetics and of CD36 ligands in the prevention and treatment of atherosclerosis and hypercholesterolemia.
24. The use of GHRP derivatives, of derived peptidomimetics, and of CD36 ligands which modulate the expression of scavenger receptor B (CD36) in the prevention of the development of atherosclerotic lesions and in the prevention of heart attacks and strokes associated with coronary artery disease and hypercholesterolemia.
25. The use of GHRP derivatives and of derived peptidomimetics which modulate the expression of the ATP-binding cassette ABCA1 transporter and scavenger receptor B (CD36) in the prevention of the development of atherosclerotic lesions and in the prevention of heart attacks and strokes associated with coronary artery disease and hypercholesterolemia.

26. A pharmaceutical composition containing a compound as defined in Claims 23 to 25 above, to be administered exogenously.